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## THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

27 December 1976

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy to the DCI for National Intelligence  
Deputy Director for Intelligence

FROM: National Intelligence Officer for Strategic Programs

SUBJECT: Review of "B" Team Report on Soviet Objectives

1. As you know, the referenced "B" Team report contained both an alternative view of Soviet objectives and an extensive critique of present and past US estimates about Soviet force programs and capabilities. I have pointed out to the NFIB, in the presence of the "B" Team, that the "B" Team's critique of estimative methodology and conclusions is dependent on, and indeed part of, the "B" Team's case for a more ominous interpretation of Soviet objectives. I have also acknowledged that in the interests of getting on with this year's NIE, only a preliminary review of the "B" Team critique has been made, but that a critical and self-critical review of it must be performed. (See my statement to NFIB, attached.)

2. It is apparent that much of the "B" Team's critique of NIE's is and will be seen to be directed at CIA as an institution. Reasons for this include CIA's well-known leading role in the preparation of NIEs, the "B" Team's citation of certain CIA reports along with the NIE's, and the fact that this year the NIE itself contains dissenting statements about Soviet objectives by DIA and all of the military services which are generally consistent with the "B" Team's views. The "B" Team's separate recommendations to PFIAB state explicitly that CIA is the problem. (See paragraph 2B, page 4, of their recommendations, attached.)

3. Partly in response to my expressed concerns but mostly on OSR's initiative, the responsible offices of CIA have already prepared some hasty comments on the "B" Team's criticisms as they apply to the current estimate. Those comments contributed to my remarks to NFIB. But no one has had time to scrub and consolidate them, to review past estimates, or to draw the careful conclusions which would be necessary to evaluate the validity of the "B" Team's general conclusions and, hence, its recommendations. (See internal OSR transmittal memo, attached.)

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4. In order to move on with this important task expeditiously, professionally, and objectively, I believe it is necessary to prepare the equivalent of a CIA Intelligence Memorandum analyzing the "B" Team report and current and past estimates. This would fulfill a recommendation by PFIAB that the experiment in competitive analysis include written commentary by each team on the other team's findings. In this case, the "B" Team's report is already such a commentary. In this case also, the full scope of the "B" Team report is well beyond the purview of the counterpart "A" Team. Partly for this reason, partly to get on with it, and partly because the "B" Team's criticisms are so clearly directed at CIA, I believe it would be preferable not to handle this review as an interagency project, at least initially.

5. Because of the work involved, the other tasks of substance and reorganization confronting the DDI, and the desirability of employing qualified but disinterested expertise, I have taken the liberty of inviting [redacted] to return from retirement temporarily, immediately after the first of the year, to offer his services as principal analyst on this project. To complete it promptly and effectively, he would need contact points and assistance from the DDI and DDI offices as well as the D/DCI/NI. The project would have to be understood to have as legitimate a claim on analytical, supervisory, and clerical resources as other substantive intelligence tasks. If these conditions are met, I believe that an end-January deadline for completing the project would be realistic.

6. I hope you will agree that this is the correct next step and that it is a vital one. Granted that there may be pressures to respond immediately to the recommendations of the "B" Team and PFIAB about intelligence methodology and organization, particularly at a time of change in the Administration. But the long-term role of CIA and the DCI, the long-term contribution of intelligence to national security, and the long-term stance of the US toward the USSR are all put at issue in this "B" Team report. In these circumstances, our approach to the report and the recommendations should be as professional as possible.

[redacted]

/s/ Howard Stoertz, Jr.

Attachments

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SUBJECT: Review of "B" Team Report on Soviet Objectives

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20 December 1976  
H. StoertzPRELIMINARY COMMENTS"B Team" Criticisms of NIE Estimates  
on Soviet Strategic Programs and Capabilities

This "B Team" was invited to see whether a good case could be made that Soviet objectives were more ambitious and threatening than perceived by the authors of NIEs. More than half of its report is a critique of US estimates, including past and present estimates on specific Soviet force programs and capabilities. The "A Team" on Soviet objectives bears no responsibility for such estimates. In the interests of completing NIE 11-3/8-76 somewhere near on schedule, we have not diverted analytical resources to a thorough review of this portion of the "B Team" report. We will have to take the time to do it, critically and self-critically. The "A Team" has, however, given up some of its time this morning so that I could perform the duty of offering the members of NFIB some preliminary comments, which may be confirmed or refuted by detailed examination.

General Criticisms

We need to consider three general criticisms: narrowness, concentration on technical matters, "mirror-imaging."

The "B Team" criticizes the 11-3/8 series for concentrating on the relatively narrow issue of intercontinental forces and failing to address Soviet "grand strategy" (pp 10-11). The basic answer is that the physical threat to the US and its Triad is not an improper subject for an NIE. The

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intelligence community may or may not have an accurate appreciation of Soviet "grand strategy," but it was never our intention to bind all of our conclusions relevant to the total "correlation of forces" into this particular estimate.

The "B Team" report correctly notes that estimates in these series concentrate on "hardware" [REDACTED] It then asserts that by glossing over evidence from other sources we have unconsciously made unsupported and questionable assumptions about Soviet objectives, and that this is the primary cause of recurrent underestimates (page 10). As the "A Team" report on Soviet objectives will demonstrate, however, we devote considerable attention to the so-called "soft" sources. We use such information in analyzing forces and capabilities as well as in assessments of Soviet objectives. The "B Team" may disagree with our interpretations of this evidence, but we do not disregard it.

We acknowledge the "B Team's" related claim that our estimates have included "mirror-imaging." In some cases Soviet forces and capabilities are weighed in terms of US concepts. The purpose of the NIE 11-3/8 series is to provide intelligence on Soviet forces and capabilities as an input for US policy decisions, and we seek to present the data in a way that will be meaningful to US planners. With respect to "mirror-imaging" Soviet objectives, this is a serious charge which will have to be examined very carefully. Some of us think that because we are looking at a complex society in a complex world, distinctions can and should be made between, say, military doctrine and leadership expectations. In some cases, therefore, what the "B Team" calls "mirror-imaging" is in reality an honest disagreement about substance. Thus the charge

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of "mirror-imaging," and the selective quotation from past estimates to support it, should not be regarded as independent of the "B Team's" case for a more ominous interpretation of Soviet objectives, but as dependent on and part of that case.

One of our problems may be that we have tended to concentrate on the question of Soviet policy for the period of an estimate, leaving unsaid some truths about long-term Soviet goals. We are seeking to guard against any such tendency in the presentation of the present estimate.

#### Central Systems

The "B Team," like all critics for years, notes past underestimates of Soviet missile forces (page 20). These were indeed serious. Partly because of past misestimates, the 11-3/8 series now presents a range of alternative future Soviet force levels and capabilities as a more effective way to assist US planners. The "B Team" fails to recognize this methodology and its importance.

#### Economic Constraints

In implying that low estimates of Soviet defense spending have warped our estimates of Soviet forces (page 21), the "B Team" has misperceived our procedures. Our cost estimates have been based on our estimates of actual forces, not the reverse. The force estimates have been much more heavily influenced by the record of Soviet performance than by gross resource constraints. The "B Team" also fails to note that NIE discussion of Soviet military programs has generally been in terms of dollar costs, while it was the ruble cost estimates which were underestimated. The suggestion that our military costing analysts are subject to any policy influence whatever (page 22) should be rejected.

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### Civil Defense and Military Hardening

We should acknowledge that we failed to give sufficient attention to Soviet civil defenses in the early 1970s (page 23). This is an instance in which "B Team" comments about "mirror-imaging" are relevant, in part because intelligence research priorities are affected by the needs expressed by US policymaking consumers of intelligence. Also, a review of evidence in 1970 did not suggest a vigorous Soviet program. The "B Team" criticism fails to acknowledge our thorough review of this subject during the past year, undertaken promptly when we realized the potential importance of this Soviet program.

### Mobile Missiles

Some of the "B Team's" concerns about mobile missiles are the same as ours, but the "B Team" analysis and forecast ignores such factors as the potential US threat to Soviet silos (page 26).

### Backfire

The "B Team" alleges intelligence preoccupation with the case for a peripheral role for Backfire (page 27). No NIE has obscured the fact that Backfire can reach the US. I believe we have a responsibility to supply US policymakers with intelligence judgments about both the range and missions of this aircraft--and about differences in the intelligence community on these questions--as we regularly do for other weapon systems.

### Anti-Satellite Testing

The "B Team" view on the Soviet antisatellite system (page 29) is generally consistent with ours.

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Strategic ASW

In questioning our estimate of Soviet capabilities to counter the US SSBN force (page 31), the "B Team" uses a logic chain which, however persuasive, is not a substitute for the technical judgments reached by the intelligence community after thorough study. The NIE's have noted that this is a high priority Soviet objective and that Soviet progress in ASW technology must be very carefully watched. Any implication that technical analysis of Soviet ASW is affected by policy considerations (page 33) should be rejected.

ABM, Directed Energy, and Strategic Defense

I find expressions like Soviet laser and CPB efforts in ABM are of a "magnitude that is difficult to overestimate" unprofessional (page 34). There are, for example, differences of view in the intelligence community about whether Soviet directed energy research is more ambitious than that of the US. These differences reflect intensive professional study and debate.

The "B Team's" point about fragmented analysis of Soviet defensive capabilities is well taken. After a detailed review of future air defense capabilities, including the investigation of this subject by one of the other "B Teams," we are being much more cautious about making overall generalizations and net judgments this year (page 34).

Non-Central Systems

The "B Team" is correct that peripheral attack systems are part of the Soviet strategic force posture (page 34). While the subject of NIE 11-3/8 is Soviet forces for intercontinental conflict, an interagency study of peripheral attack forces is currently in process.

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Annex on NIE Perceptions

The quotations from past estimates are obviously very selective. Careful research will be required before any comments can be made.

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